

Iowa Department of Corrections
PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) in cases involving criminal behavior is a voluntary process that allows a crime victim to meet with the person who victimized them, or a loved one, in a safe setting with a trained facilitator. The purpose of this encounter is to allow both parties to talk about the crime, receive answers to questions, and to express their feelings and concerns related to the crime.

While there are often emotional benefits for one or both parties in such encounters, Dialogue is not a form of psychotherapy. Parties are encouraged to seek assistance from others and, if needed, counselors, therapists and/or therapy groups if available. Parties are offered the option of having a support person in the preparation and/or Dialogue session, although this is not required.

The role of the facilitator is to provide a safe and structured format for the victim and the offender to engage in Dialogue. Primary points of focus are to provide an opportunity for the parties to talk directly to each other; to allow victims to express the full impact of the crime upon their lives and receive answers to important questions they have; and to allow offenders to understand the real human impact of their behavior and take direct responsibility for seeking to make things right.

The potential benefits of VOD include: having an opportunity to actively participate in the process of resolving the incident, express the impact of the crime both short-term and long-term, have questions answered, and to experience a greater sense of healing. There are, however, potential risks. These include: bringing up painful feelings from the past, a possible resurgence of trauma symptoms, and having an unrealistic expectation about what the Dialogue process can accomplish.

This Participant Consent Form is to verify that you understand what the Dialogue process consists of, including the preparation and follow-up phases, and that you understand you can request a support person to be present with you during the Dialogue session. This also verifies that you and the facilitator have discussed the potential benefits and risks of participating in this process, and that you voluntarily choose to participate. In addition, by signing below, you verify you understand the limits to confidentiality and agree to the use of online programs if preparation sessions and/or the Dialogue itself are conducted via an online platform, such as Zoom, Skype, Google, or Microsoft. Your signature indicates that you understand such programs may own the material resulting from use of their product and, therefore, the DOC cannot guarantee confidentiality.

Participant Signature

Date

Participant's Address

Phone

Facilitator's Signature

Date